

# ARS □ CSREES □ ERS □ NASS

## *Policies and Procedures*

***Title:*** Part-Time Employment

***Number:*** 4340

***Date:*** 5/18/94

***Originating Office:*** Economics Management Staff

***This Replaces:*** 3340 dated 7/24/92

***Distribution:*** All Agencies

This P&P defines the part-time career employment program and urges its implementation. It also contains information on the administration of part-time employment in general, including work schedules, pay, classification, and benefits.

## Table of Contents

|    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 1. | Introduction . . . . .                                  | 3  |
| 2. | Participation and Initiation . . . . .                  | 3  |
|    | Eligibility . . . . .                                   | 3  |
|    | Exceptions to the Law . . . . .                         | 4  |
|    | Launching the Program . . . . .                         | 4  |
| 3. | Administration of Part-Time Employment . . . . .        | 5  |
|    | Tour of Duty . . . . .                                  | 5  |
|    | Changes in Tour of Duty . . . . .                       | 6  |
|    | Pay and Classification . . . . .                        | 6  |
|    | Overtime, Compensatory Time, and Credit Hours . . . . . | 6  |
|    | Promotions and Within-Grade Increases . . . . .         | 7  |
|    | Service Credit . . . . .                                | 8  |
|    | Performance Appraisals and Bonuses . . . . .            | 8  |
|    | Benefits . . . . .                                      | 8  |
|    | Leave . . . . .   | 9  |
|    | Holidays . . . . .                                      | 10 |
|    | Reduction in Force . . . . .                            | 10 |
| 4. | Summary of Responsibilities . . . . .                   | 11 |

## **1. Introduction**

The part-time career employment program has two goals: (1) to encourage both supervisors and career-oriented employees to explore the advantages of part-time work schedules and (2) to increase the opportunities for part-time career employment. Part-time career employment offers many benefits for both agencies and employees: increased productivity and job satisfaction, lower turnover and absenteeism, and more flexibility in filling positions. The program will especially benefit employees who either require or prefer a reduced work schedule, (e.g., students, older employees, individuals with physical or mental challenges, and people with family responsibilities). Because of its wide appeal, the part-time career employment program, if used actively and creatively, can result in a more diversified work force.

To the extent possible, managers in the Economics agencies must provide part-time career employment opportunities for all employees who meet the criteria outlined in Chapter 2 below. The Director of EMS's Personnel Division administers the program under the direction of agency heads.<sup>1</sup>

## **2. Participation and Initiation**

### **Eligibility**

The part-time career employment program does not cover all part-time employees or their positions. Rather, it targets only those who:

- work a regularly scheduled tour of duty.
- work no fewer than 16 hours per week and no more than 32 hours per week.
- hold a career or career-conditional appointment (including employees still serving a probationary period), or an unrestricted excepted appointment with indefinite tenure or tenure equivalent to career conditional.
- are in positions grade GS-15 and below.

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<sup>1</sup>The Federal Employees Part-Time Career Employment Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-437) established the legal requirement for this program.

Notably, these criteria **exclude** the following:

- intermittent work schedules,
- part-time temporary appointments, and
- part-time positions in grade GS-16 and above.

While intermittent employment is a separate issue and, therefore, excluded by definition, part-time temporary appointments and part-time senior positions are still part-time employment. They are not, however, a part of the formally legislated part-time career employment program. Managers are not required by law to provide increased employment opportunities in these particular categories.

## Exceptions to the Law

The law which launched the part-time career employment program not only promotes part-time employment of 16-32 hours per week, it actually requires that most regularly scheduled part-time positions observe the 16 hour minimum and the 32 hour per week maximum. The law, however, does allow some exceptions:

- An agency may permit a career employee to work from 1 to 15 hours per week if such a tour of duty is **necessary to the agency's mission**; the Director of EMS's Personnel Division must approve all such schedules.
- An agency may schedule an employee to work part-time during a portion of the year and full-time and/or intermittently for the remainder (i.e., a mixed tour of duty). An employee under a mixed tour may work less than 16 or more than 32 hours per week provided the employee works no more than 6 pay periods per year on a part-time schedule.
- Part-time temporary appointments and intermittent employment.
- Part-time employment that began before the part-time career employment law went into effect (April 8, 1979).

Again, most of these situations still include part-time work, but they are not within the scope of the part-time career employment program. As such, managers are not expected to promote employment in these situations, nor does the pertinent legislation apply.

## Launching the Program

To launch the part-time career program, managers and supervisors should review both new and existing positions to determine the feasibility of filling them on a permanent part-time basis or of converting encumbered positions to part-time once they are vacated. They should consider the following factors:

- agency mission and occupational mix;
- work fluctuations and special staffing needs;
- size of work force, turnover rate, and employment trends;
- potential for enhancing work force diversity;
- potential for improving service to the public;
- current or potential employees' interest in part-time employment; and
- personnel ceiling and budgetary constraints.

If supervisors determine that they can fill vacant positions on a part-time career basis, they may announce the positions as such, or, with the option of either full-time or part-time employment.

### **3. Administration of Part-Time Employment**

Although the focus of this P&P is on part-time career employment, much of the following information—unless otherwise noted—also applies to part-time employment in general, including temporary appointments. In most respects, part-time career and part-time temporary positions are treated the same, but differences do occur, particularly in employee benefits.

#### **Tour of Duty**

Except as noted in Chapter 2, a part-time tour of duty will be a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 32 hours long. As with full-time employees, the part-time employee's daily schedule will allow for a 30 minute (unpaid) lunch break (a lunch break is not required if the work schedule is 5 consecutive hours or less).

## Changes in Tour of Duty

Part-time employees may adjust their schedules on a temporary or permanent basis to meet fluctuations in workload. If part-time employees wish to increase their scheduled hours beyond the 32 hour maximum, they may do so for no more than two consecutive pay periods. The immediate supervisor must approve any change in advance of the workweek in which it will occur.

If the change--either an increase or a decrease--is of limited duration (i.e., two pay periods or less), the annotated time and attendance log will provide adequate documentation of the revised schedule. If, on the other hand, the adjusted schedule is expected to last for a while (i.e., beyond two pay periods), the supervisor must submit a form SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, to EMS's Personnel Division to document the action. If the change is temporary, the supervisor will annotate the SF-52 to show the not-to-exceed date.

However necessary these changes may be for efficient office operations, supervisors must obtain the employees' consent before either increasing or decreasing their scheduled hours. It is an adverse action to reduce a part-time career employee's total number of scheduled hours unless the employee requests or agrees to the change. (It is not an adverse action to increase the scheduled hours of work; however, such action is grievable.)

Adverse action regulations **do not apply** to part-time **temporary** employees.

## Pay and Classification

The same classification procedures and principles that apply to full-time positions also apply to part-time positions. The classifier examines the duties and responsibilities assigned, not the employee's schedule.

The calculation of pay is equally straightforward. The hourly rate of pay is multiplied by the number of hours worked (or otherwise in a pay status) during the pay period.

## Overtime, Compensatory Time, and Credit Hours

**Overtime Pay.** A part-time employee earns overtime pay or compensatory time off for work requested by management in excess of 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week. For work which does not exceed 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week, but which does exceed the normally scheduled tour of duty, the employee receives straight-time pay. This applies to both standard and flexible work schedules.

**Credit Hours under ECONFlex.** Part-time employees are eligible to earn credit hours for hours

worked in excess of the basic work requirement. It is the employees' choice to work for credit, but they may do so only with the supervisor's prior approval. (In consideration of current and projected work requirements, supervisors may prefer to pay part-time employees straight-time pay instead of granting credit until work hours equate to full-time on a daily or weekly basis.) There are two stipulations. The employees must:

- be in pay status for all hours of the basic work requirement in the pay period in which they earn credit hours, and
- work the complete basic work requirement on any day in which they earn credit hours.

Please see EAA P&P 4610, "Hours of Duty/ECONFlex," for additional information.

**Compensatory Overtime for Religious Observances.** With supervisory approval, the employee may elect to work unpaid overtime in compensation for time off for religious observances. (See EAA P&P 4630, "Absence and Leave," for further details.)

**Sunday Pay.** Part-time employees do not earn Sunday premium pay.

## Promotions and Within-Grade Increases

**Promotions.** Each agency's merit promotion plan includes part-time career employees, who are eligible for promotion on the same basis as full-time employees. Since most positions require specific amounts of experience at various grade levels, the experience earned on a part-time schedule will usually require some calculation.<sup>2</sup>

Part-time **temporary** employees are **not eligible** for promotion.

**Within-Grade Increases.** The waiting periods for part-time career employees are the same as for full-time personnel:

52 calendar weeks of creditable service to reach steps 2, 3, and 4.

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<sup>2</sup>In most cases, an employee must acquire 52 weeks of specialized experience at a particular grade level in order to qualify for the next higher grade. The 52-week requirement assumes a full-time schedule. An employee working only 20 hours per week (half of a full-time tour of duty), would have to remain in the lower grade for a minimum of 104 weeks in order to gain the needed experience and qualify for promotion.

104 calendar weeks of creditable service to reach steps 5, 6, and 7.

156 calendar weeks of creditable service to reach steps 8, 9, and 10.

To earn full credit toward a within-grade increase, a workweek need not be 40 hours long; as long as the employees work a minimum of 16 hours in a week, they will earn a full week of credit toward completing the required waiting period.

Part-time **temporary** employees are **not eligible** for within-grade increases.

## Service Credit

Regardless of the tour of duty, a part-time employee earns a full year of service credit for each **calendar year** worked for the purpose of determining the following:

- service retention
- retirement eligibility
- career tenure
- completion of probationary period
- leave accrual rate
- time-in-grade

Service in part-time **temporary** positions **does earn credit for leave** purposes; however, the other items listed above **do not apply** to temporary employment.

## Performance Appraisals and Bonuses

As with full-time positions, the supervisor develops performance elements and standards appropriate to the part-time work performed. Supervisors then use the standards as a yardstick in measuring performance. The approach is exactly the same regardless of the employee's schedule. If performance justifies special recognition, the Merit award will depend on an agency's incentive awards program or annual bonus formula.

Part-time temporary employees may participate in their agency's appraisal and bonus programs at management's discretion. Their participation, however, is not required.

## Benefits



**Health Insurance.** Part-time career employees may participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. The coverage provided for part-time career and full-time employees is the same, but the part-time employees' cost is greater, since the Government's contribution is prorated according to the number of hours worked.

Part-time **temporary** employees are **not eligible** for health insurance coverage until they have completed at least 1 year of current, continuous service. Coverage for temporary employees is, however, significantly more expensive, since there is no Government contribution; should the employees elect to participate, they will pay the full premium.

**Life Insurance.** Part-time career employees may participate in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program, with the amount of insurance based on annual salary.

Part-time **temporary** employees are **not eligible** for life insurance.

**Retirement.** As with full-time employees, retirement annuities for part-time employees are based on the length of service and the highest annual basic pay received for any 3 consecutive years. Each year of part-time service counts as 1 full year toward the length of service required to qualify for retirement, but the annuity benefit is prorated to reflect the difference between full-time and part-time service. Under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), the entire benefit is prorated; under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), only the portion of the benefit attributable to part-time service after April 6, 1986, is prorated.

Part-time **temporary** employees are **not eligible** for retirement benefits.

## Leave

All part-time employees, both career and temporary, earn sick leave; career employees and temporaries who are **appointed for 90 days or longer** also earn annual leave. The accrual of both sick and annual leave is prorated based on the number of hours worked.

**Annual Leave Accrual.** A part-time employee earns annual leave on a prorated basis according to the number of hours spent in pay status. (See EAA P&P 4630 for additional details.)

**Annual Leave Carryover.** As with full-time employees, part-time employees may carry over a maximum of 240 hours.

**Sick Leave and Other Leave.** Part-time employees earn 1 hour of sick leave for every 20 hours worked. Part-time employees are also eligible for leave without pay, court leave, and administrative leave on the same basis as full-time employees.

## Holidays

**Paid Holidays.** If the part-time employee's regular schedule includes a holiday, the employee will have the day off and will be paid for the number of hours scheduled. If the employee cannot take the day off, but is required to work on the holiday, the employee earns holiday premium pay for the number of hours worked.

Part-time employees will not be paid for holidays that fall outside their scheduled tours of duty, nor may supervisors change the tours of duty for the sole purpose of entitling them to holiday pay.

**In Lieu of Holidays.** An "in lieu of" holiday is a day treated as a holiday by the Federal Government (e.g., Christmas is on Sunday; the following Monday is the "in lieu of" holiday). When the "in lieu of" holiday falls on the part-time employee's regularly scheduled workday, the supervisor will grant administrative leave for the employee's normal tour of duty. Part-time employees who work on an "in lieu of" holiday receive straight-time pay for the hours worked up to 8 hours and overtime or compensatory time off for any hours thereafter.

## Reduction in Force

In a reduction in force, part-time career employees compete only with part-time employees; they do not compete with comparable full-time employees. If they are released from their positions, part-time employees can compete only for other part-time jobs. Similarly, full-time employees can compete only for other full-time jobs; they cannot displace part-time employees.

Part-time **temporary** employees generally do **not compete** during a reduction in force. They are released from their positions before the competition begins.

## **4. Summary of Responsibilities**

### **Agency Heads**

- Direct the agency's part-time career employment program and establish program goals.

### **Managers and Supervisors**

- Review new and existing positions to determine the feasibility of filling them on a permanent, part-time basis.
- Consider and, wherever possible, approve employees' requests for conversion to part-time employment.
- Uphold the Department's diversity goals in all actions related to part-time career employment.

### **Director, Personnel Division, EMS**

- Administers the Economics agencies' part-time career employment programs.
- Monitors progress toward expanding part-time career opportunities and prepares all necessary reports.
- Determines if certain positions are exempt from regulations governing the part-time career employment program.

### **Employees**

- Inform supervisors of their interest in part-time career opportunities.
- Request conversion from full-time to part-time career employment.